

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. I want to take a moment to appreciate all the public servants who have helped us fight through this crisis, fight back the coronavirus, and bring this city back. And there's a lot of them who have served at the frontline, our health care heroes, our first responders, our essential workers. There's a lot of folks who you've seen up here in these press conferences, our health leadership, who've done an outstanding job. And so many other leaders who have spoken to you about what we need to do together to overcome this crisis. And one thing I'll say is in this moment of history, arguably the greatest crisis New York City has ever faced, we've seen so many people step up. We've seen so many people dig deep and find strength, even when they were tired, even when they had been working nonstop, we've seen it throughout. In fact, the story of our public servants is a heroic story, and one that I hope will get the attention it deserves. There's a lot of people have played really crucial roles that the public really didn't get to know, but I saw every day their outstanding efforts to keep this city moving forward, no matter what was thrown at us.

So, today we celebrate two of those individuals and we celebrate them by giving them new, crucial roles in this administration as we continue to build the leadership to go through something that's absolutely uncharted territory. We've never seen a situation like this in our city's history before. We need extraordinarily talented, committed people to help us through and help us rebuild and help us fight whatever else is thrown at us up ahead. And I have tremendous confidence that we have extraordinary talent to draw upon. So, let me tell you about where we have found our path so far and what it means to where we're going. What we've done throughout is focus on keeping this city strong in terms of our health care response, in terms of our workforce, but also in terms of our approach to our budget reality, which allows us to pay for all those public servants, to be really careful and smart in how we use our resources so that we have the ability to keep our workforce strong and keep providing the basic services that are the foundation of restart and recovery. The person who we have turned to throughout that process for leadership is our Budget Director, Melanie Hartzog. And she and her team at OMB have done an amazing job figuring out a path, always being creative and resourceful, determining how we could have the resources we need, no matter what was missing. Particularly that federal stimulus, we all were waiting on that never came or the FEMA support that's actually been declining when it should be increasing. Melanie Hartzog led the way to making sure that we had the resources we needed, but she also played an absolutely crucial role in the strategic work of the team at a point where we had to find other types of resources we didn't have.

Remember we started this crisis with essentially no testing or very, very little, and the federal government not able to provide us what we needed. We lacked PPE. There were so many things

missing and Melanie Hartzog is one of the unsung heroes who created a way for us to get what we needed, who helped us build up that testing system from scratch, helped us make sure we had what would allow us to weather the storm. She played a crucial role in all the elements of our response. And in light of that and her extraordinary efforts across the board, and her deep knowledge of every City agency as budget director, including her own work earlier in her career in the Administration for Children's Services and her deep connection to social service agencies and the work they do – for all these reasons she is the perfect pick to be our new Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services. I have known Melanie for many years, going way back to the time when I was in the City Council. And sometimes we were on different sides of an issue, but I always recognized her extraordinary intelligence and her commitment and her deep feeling for the people she serves. And when you think of a budget director, sometimes maybe you think of the green eyeshade, and you think of someone who thinks just about the accounting or the numbers. Melanie thinks about the people, and that will stand her in good stead as our new Deputy Mayor. So, it's my pleasure to introduce Deputy Mayor Melanie Hartzog.

Deputy Mayor Melanie Hartzog, Health and Human Services: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and especially thank you for this opportunity to continue to serve New York City as we navigate one of the most difficult crisis that the city has ever faced. I've spent my entire career dedicated to improving the lives of New Yorkers, starting in the office of the Bronx Borough President, serving Mayor Bloomberg, and now Mayor de Blasio, and as the Executive Director of the Children's Defense Fund of New York. I have seen the transformative impact government can make in our communities. When policy is crafted to lift everyone up and create opportunities for all, especially in health, our city becomes stronger. Throughout my life, I've seen how providing health care and education opportunities, especially for children, can build a more just and successful society. Growing up, poverty was a constant struggle for my family. Homelessness, unemployment, and hunger are struggles that I'm all too familiar with. My mother and her family came to this country from Guyana, seeking the opportunity to build a better life. And I'm proud to embody my parents' hopes and dreams that their children would have a better future and commit to helping others achieve the same. I'm honored to take on this role as we continue to rebuild and fight back COVID-19 with a focus on ensuring that our city is healthy and fairer, a city where it doesn't matter what borough you're from, what economic background you have, or what color of your skin is, a New York City that provides opportunity for all. Before I finish, I just want to sincerely thank the incredible team at OMB that I work with day-in and day-out for all of their work during this crisis. I know the office is in good hands with Jacques at the helm, and I'm honored to serve as a Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services. And in this role, I will continue to help create a fair and safe future for all New Yorkers. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you, Melanie. Well deserved. And I know today your family is very proud and I know today that people who will benefit from your leadership are going to feel the effects of someone who truly cares, truly understands playing such a crucial role in our City government, particularly as we navigate this crisis. Now, we have another major announcement and as Melanie leaves her role as OMB Director, we need a very strong, smart presence in that role to continue that work at one of the most challenging times in New York City's history, when it comes to our budget and our fiscal dynamic. And one of the things I saw with Jacques Jiha, over these last seven years that we've been working together, was a keen, keen mind, tremendous experience, a common, even demeanor no matter what was thrown at us, an ability to dig deep

for solutions. As our Finance Commissioner, he has been, throughout this administration, resourceful and creative. And he also is someone who not only thinks about the numbers but thinks about the humanity. There are some people who, their story just epitomizes what we truly believe in as the American dream. That true idea of equality and opportunity. And Jacques is truly one of those people. So, it is my great pleasure to introduce our current Finance Commissioner, but soon to be our Office of Management and Budget Director, Jacques Jiha.

Director Jacques Jiha, Office of Management and Budget: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I want to start by thanking my family and close friends who have always been there for me in good and bad times in particular, my wife, Marie, and my daughters, Kimberly and Christine. I also want to sincerely thank the talented women and men of the Department of Finance. You are the unsung heroes and heroines of City government. It is because of your hard work that the City can pay for everyday services. Your professionalism is unmatched. And so, I'm proud to have been your commissioner. Mayor de Blasio, thank you very much for this great opportunity and the confidence you place in me. Special thanks, also, to First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan. I will work as hard as I can with my eyes wide open on the goals and objectives we set for the city, with my ears open to the diverse voices of our stakeholders, and with my heart dedicated to always do right by the citizens of this great city. For me, this is a moment of great joy and great honor. When I first came to New York from Haiti in 1979 as a young man, I worked as a parking garage attendant on Fulton Street, not too far from here, while I attended Fordham University in the evening. Today, I'm appointed to the position of Budget Director for the City of New York. What a journey it has been. This can only happen in New York City, a city that has given me so much, from the opportunity to earn a PhD in economics, for the opportunity to become Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Black Enterprise, and New York City Finance Commissioner. Of course, with great honor comes great responsibility and commitment.

Today, this great city is facing some difficult challenges. I owe it to this city to do what I can to help lead the fiscal recovery. The crisis at hand is challenging, but we have overcome similar challenges in the past. In partnership with our stakeholders, in particular the labor unions, we will continue to make tough choices to balance the City's budget and financial plan with minimum disruption to services while maintaining our competitive position. Mayor de Blasio, as a record of strong fiscal management and record reserves, we'll continue to build upon the foundation of fiscal responsibility laid by this administration. There is a rough road ahead of us. We'll have to make some tough and, at times, disruptive decisions. We are counting on the cooperation of our federal and State partners to minimize such disruption. While our focus to solve the fiscal crisis will be on working with our labor union partners to identify the saving actions that are under our control, we need a second round of federal fiscal stimulus, including federal aid to states and localities and all the authority from the State to borrow long-term so we could speed the City's economic recovery and avoid layoffs and cuts to vital services. Rest assured that as we make tough budgetary decisions in the months ahead, we will remain committed to protect the most vulnerable among us. Again, thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you, Jacques. Congratulations to you and your family. Melanie, congratulations to you and your family. Great new leadership to help us move forward. And speaking of moving forward, let's talk now about how we're doing in the city overall, how we're doing in some of the areas that have had particular challenges in recent weeks in Brooklyn and Queens. I'll go over the

citywide indicators in a moment. I think the big top line here is we still do continue to see a leveling off in some of the areas of greatest concern. That's good news, but we've got more work to do. We want to keep making that progress. And I want to emphasize, everyone wants to get out of the restrictions as quickly as possible. It does take hard work. We learned that back in March and April, but it can be done. We've learned that as well. So, to everyone in those red and orange zones, continue to dig deeper. We need to have people wearing those masks, practicing social distancing, all of the basics. And we want to keep this period of restriction as limited as possible, but we still need to make more progress overall. We're talking constantly with the State to figure out the exact timing of each move we'll make, but we do, overall, need to see more progress before we can remove restrictions. Now, there is an area where we have seen particular progress and that is notable and appreciated. That's in the central Queens red zone. Those numbers have gotten substantially better. So, that's an area that we're pleased about. Want to see folks in central Queens consolidate that progress. That's a good example to everyone else in the red and orange zones that we can turn this around and turn this around quickly with a strong united effort.

So, as I go into the indicators, again, I'm going to state it very clearly – the goal is to stop a second wave of the coronavirus in New York City. We can stop a second wave. Right now, the numbers suggest we are stopping a second wave, but we have to remain vigilant. And this next week or two will be crucial to make sure we consolidate our progress and retain the progress we had previously, because remember through so much of the summer in New York City was the envy of the country. We can be that again very soon if we all do the work we need to do. So, let's go over the indicators for today citywide. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 patients. Today's report is 76 patients, with a confirmed positivity of 16.4 percent for the coronavirus. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, threshold is 550 cases. Today's report is 471. Number three, percent of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19, threshold five percent. Today's report 2.17 percent. And today's seven-day rolling average indicator is 1.62 percent. I'll do a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that let's turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We will now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder we're joined today by new HHS Deputy Mayor Melanie Hartzog, new OMB Director Jacques Jiha, Dr. Chokshi, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question goes to Dave Evans from WABC.

Question: Good morning, Mayor. Can you hear me okay?

Mayor: How are you doing today?

Question: I'm great. First of all, congratulations to Melanie and Jacques. But I wanted to ask you about the numbers in the red zone, in Central Queens specifically. Do you see the lifting of

restrictions this week that we could see schools open, at least in that area, businesses back open this week?

Mayor: Dave, still a little early to tell again, if you're talking about the red zones and the orange zones overall in Brooklyn and Queens some more work to be done. It looks like another week or two of work, overall. If you're talking about Central Queens, we've seen some notable progress there. We're going to be talking with the State about how we analyze that. We want to see obviously a couple more days of data before any final decisions. I think it's a little early to project or predict but still it is possible that we could see some action later on this week, based on our conversations with the State.

Question: My second question is a little bit different subject, and that is, I know you watched over the weekend, the Governor rolled out what his plan is for when, and if we will, when we do get a vaccine and it's a pretty elaborate plan, but this morning on GMA, he was talking about his doubt and the doubt that so many New Yorkers have with this administration, that it's going to be something that they can trust as safe and effective. I just wanted to see your thoughts on that, and if we do get here in a few weeks, a month or so, a vaccine, are you going to take it?

Mayor: Look, absolutely. My assumption, Dave, is a vaccine that is created by the medical community, that's gone through appropriate trials and certainly validated by our health care leadership here is something I absolutely want to take. We don't want any political actions when it comes to vaccine. We want the real thing that's going to serve our people, and that's based on the validation of the medical community. I do think it's a real issue. There's a lot, unfortunately, a lot of distrust and a lot of concern out there, but I think what will happen is when there's a vaccine we can believe in, a lot of people will want it. Others may wait a while, but the more people who get it, the more people will want it. That's my broad assumption.

Moderator: The next is Shant from the Daily News.

Mayor: Yeah. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask about the cover story in today's Daily News, the subject of which was an apparent disparity in, you know, rates of using in-person learning between well-to-do students with low-income students. Without taking too long to say just one example in District 15 in Park Slope, at the seven wealthiest schools, 71 percent of families were found to have opted to for in-person learning. But the 11 poorest schools, it was significantly lower, 41 percent. So, I wanted to ask, you know, given that you repeatedly framed the need to resume in-person learning in terms of helping the most vulnerable New Yorkers, what do you make of that disparity and any thoughts on ameliorating it?

Mayor: Yeah. Shant, thank you for the question. I think it's way too early to tell what's going to happen here for a variety of reasons. We certainly see a number of parents choosing to send their kids to school right now, and we see a number of parents holding back, waiting to see a little bit more what's going on. We, obviously – parents know there's going to be an opt in period coming up to make a decision to come back in. There's a lot of different pieces. So, I think what many parents are doing is watching, learning, talking to other parents who have sent their kids to school, making their decisions. So, I just think it's way too early to tell. I absolutely believe that one of the most powerful reasons to have reopened schools is to serve the kids who need the help

and support the most. We see that happening every day across New York City, and we're going to continue to reach out to any family that has concerns and answered their questions, and by the way, parents are seeing – and some of this has been reported including today – they're seeing the extraordinary results, the extraordinary facts around how few cases of the coronavirus we're seeing in our schools. These are facts that are becoming clearer and clearer. They're spreading more and more, and I think that's going to give parents a lot of confidence across all communities. Go ahead, Shant.

Question: Yeah, thanks for that. Switching gears, wanted to get your latest thoughts on the situation with homeless men, who the City had been planning to move from the Lucerne to the Radisson downtown. I understand that that's on hold. Can you sort of clarify what's going on there? Is it a temporary hold? Is it a week-long hold or what? And also, can you speak to a concern that I guess arose over the weekend that DHS is planning at the Radisson to require men there to enter not through the main entrance, but through a pub, even though that pub is closed, some of the men are saying that given that they're in recovery, it could be very triggering to them.

Mayor: Yeah, Shant, that last piece, I had not heard. I'll look into that for sure. We want to be sensitive to anyone who's in recovery and want to make sure we're treating everyone fairly. On the first piece, it's a temporary hold. We're just addressing some outstanding legal issues, but we're very confident in our legal position and having what will be ultimately a long-term shelter in the Wall Street area, an area that hasn't had one is a good thing, providing shelter with full services that's not available in hotels. That's a really good thing. Making sure homeless folks are closer to their medical providers, which will be possible now with this location. These are all things that are quintessential to our approach. So, we're confident that that's going to move forward.

Moderator: The next is Marcia from WCBS.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing today?

Mayor: I am doing well, Marcia. How are you?

Question: I'm good. Thank you. So, my first question has to do with this planned wedding of the Satmar in Williamsburg. I know that they're saying that the indoor service is going to be family only. It's unclear what's going to happen outside. I wonder what plans you have for having the NYPD presence in the area, sheriffs in the area, just in case people show up, making sure that they're social distancing, making sure that they're wearing masks, etcetera.

Mayor: Yeah, that's a very, very important question, Marcia. Look, let's start with the good part. The State and City worked together here to raise the concern. The good news is the decision was made by the folks who were putting together the wedding to have that much smaller service and to do the rest of virtually. That's very good, very helpful. We will have a backup plan ready for sure. But I am heartened by the fact that the message was heard, that it's not business as usual, that we're dealing with a crisis and we cannot let this coronavirus spread further, and different

approaches are needed at this moment in history. I think the decision to have the wedding virtually is a very, very good one. Go ahead, Marcia.

Question: So, Mr. Mayor, I know that a number of rabbis have had conversations with Governor Cuomo. I'm sure they've had conversations with your office as well. They're looking for plans to ease the restrictions. I think that the Governor has said that maybe as early as Wednesday might be able to ease the restrictions. Do you have some guidance so you could give members of these communities about when they can reopen some of their religious schools when they can reopen some of the businesses? How soon can we look for a lifting of restrictions?

Mayor: So, Marcia, first of all, we're going to do all that together with the State. We've had a series of very constructive conversations about how to approach this. I had a detailed conversation with the Governor on Friday about these zones and how to think about them going forward. The fact is we need to see some more progress in most of these areas, in red and orange zones. As I've said from the beginning, this can be as few as – a little a time as a few weeks, and this is really what I want to emphasize to people who are in those red and orange zones. We can get out of this in just a few weeks, if everyone does what they need to do. We want those restrictions off to say the least. I know the State does as well, but we've got to bring the numbers down. So, everyone needs to get tested, who hasn't been tested recently. People need to really observe those rules of social distancing, the face mask wearing, and if we do that, we can move quickly. But, again, I'd say overall, those communities need a little more time. The one that's been – where we've seen the most progress is Central Queens. We'll be talking with the State about that over the next few days.

Moderator: The next is Sydney Pereira from Gothamist.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask another question about the homelessness issue with the Lucerne residents, just regarding this lawsuit the Lower Manhattan residents have filed, and now I know the Lucerne residents themselves are really fighting to stay in the hotel on the Upper West Side. There's criticisms that your decisions on the matter have emboldened people with resources to sue the City, and that they can have their way if they do sue, so – or threatened to sue, and so now it's resulted in this lawsuit that the City is spending time and money on. Do you have any regrets on how all of this was handled and is it good public health policy during a pandemic to move people, relying on sheltering from the City based on complaints and legal threats from other community members?

Mayor: Sydney, it's a fair question, but I don't think that's what happened here. You may remember on West 58th Street, long before the pandemic, obviously one of the wealthiest areas of the city, a number of lawsuits directed at this administration trying to stop the creation of shelter there, we've prevailed consistently. We've had lawsuits pretty much anywhere we've put a shelter of every kind of community. And when we've put them in wealthier communities, which we've done very consistently, we expect to get sued, and we expect to win, and we overwhelmingly do win. The reality here is we need to get people into long-term shelter, not temporary hotels. The temporary hotels were about an immediate crisis around the coronavirus. As we can move away from them, we need to, but we have to do it the smart way and the right way. So, I think what we've learned here is to articulate very clearly, and better, what our overall

goals are, and the overall goal remains to get out of hotels and out of clusters, into purpose built shelters and use that as the gateway for getting homeless folks to permanent affordable housing. The goal is always to try and serve people, give them the services they need in the short-term, get them to long-term affordable housing, and we can do that best with facilities that are meant to be shelters. Go ahead.

Question: Okay, thank you, and the Greenpoint Ferry stop is currently not working or it's shut down because the new owner of the pier, as I understand it, is blocking NYC Ferry from accessing it. Could you tell us why this is happening and what protections does the City have to maintain public access to the pier so that people who rely on the ferry can use it?

Mayor: It's a really important point. I just heard about this this morning. It's a quizzical situation. We are hopeful we can resolve it today. But this one I think is confusing to people because it's confusing in general, and the goal is to settle it very quickly and get that ferry stop back into service, hopefully as early as the end of today.

Moderator: The next is Rich Lamb from WCBS 880.

Question: Morning, Mr. Mayor, and everybody on the call. Hi, I'm doing okay. So, Mr. Mayor, you mentioned which community or communities have done the best in the red zones, which ones are the most problematic, which ones are the worst?

Mayor: Well, look again, I don't want to, for a moment, miss the fact that so many people, Rich, are working really hard. They're working hard to adapt to these restrictions and working hard to make sure that they follow social distancing more and more people wearing masks. We see a lot of good work and a lot of great cooperation from community leaders and organizations. I think we still, the one that – the key issue is we need more testing. In general, we need more and more people get tested. I would say that is more of a problem in Brooklyn than in Queens. That's one of the things I want to see real improvement on this week is that – let's get a true picture of the community and the reality and folks who haven't been tested, getting out there and getting tested will really, really help us move forward. Go ahead.

Question: Okay. Mr. Mayor, just wondering, everybody talks about COVID fatigue, do you have it?

Mayor: I think we all have it, Rich. I think it's tough. You know, we were in February for God's sakes, we were all living such a different life and a lot of things were going really well in New York City, and suddenly our lives were just massively disrupted. I miss a lot of life before. I know so many people do so we're all tired of being in a crisis situation, but I am really encouraged by the fact that we've come as far as we have, and I'm encouraged by the fact that this is a crisis with an end. You know, sometimes, Rich, I have referred to the family dynamics I grew up in and because my parents were World War II generation, you know, they were in the middle of crisis, they didn't know when it was going to end. I really remember those stories and certainly the Depression before it, like there was no timeline, there was fear that it could go on for a long, long time. Here, as painful as it has been and difficult it has been, we are pretty certain that at some point in 2021, there is a vaccine and it's widely distributed and we really get

to turn the page, and that, that's what I cling to, knowing that, you know, we just have to fight our way through.

Moderator: The next is Julia Marsh from The Post.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Julia, how are you?

Question: Good. A question on indoor and outdoor dining, is the City doing anything to help eateries with the cost of installing, buying, and maintaining heaters for outdoor dining? And we were supposed to reassess upping indoor dining to 50 percent capacity on November 1st, how do you think that's looking?

Mayor: On the first point, I don't know of an overall plan, Julia, I'll have our team follow up with you. You know, anything we can do to help any small business, including obviously restaurants, we will and there's loan programs and other things out there that might be applicable. Small Business Services does a lot of real direct work with businesses to help them figure out what they can take advantage of. So, I would say to any small business, any restaurant, that's not sure they can afford something and wants to think about what their options might be, turn to Small Business Services, that department will help you. In terms of what might happen over the next few weeks and we'll be talking with the State regularly about indoor dining. I think the most obvious answer is it really depends on the numbers. The more we can beat back the problem we're having in some parts of Brooklyn and Queens, the better off we'll all be, the more we can keep pushing down our overall number, and our seven-day average number has been pretty good, I want us to keep us pushing that down, the better chance we have of going farther, but it's just premature now to project, we need to get farther up the road and we need to work with the State on that. Go ahead.

Question: And then back to the homeless situation and specifically the Lucerne and the Radisson, one of your spokesmen said last night that there were going to be some residents who were supposed to go to the Lucerne, moved into the Radisson. But I thought the program was supposed to be winding down, is that no longer the case? And what's the deadline for when you're going to stop using these hotels?

Mayor: I don't have the exact date. We'll have our team follow up with you. The bottom line here is by opening up a facility that will be a shelter, an actual shelter with full services, we're going to be able to accommodate folks coming out of Lucerne and we can accommodate others as well. So, we're going to use the fact that we have a new and better facility to help homeless people. And then overall as we continue to make progress on the disease and as we continue to have more space in our shelter system, overall, we're going to be looking to move out of hotels that we're paying for by the day and get into shelter. That's always been the vision, we do not want to it's – you know, certainly when you look at the long term needs of the city, our goal in the coming years for this city is to be out of hotels altogether and have folks who are homeless in shelter on their way to permanent affordable housing.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing today?

Mayor: Doing good Henry, how you been?

Question: I'm okay. The report that you gave today lacks any data about these areas, and I can't determine whether or not the city is doing better or worse. The average infection rate has risen to 1.62 percent, and that's higher than it was during your last report, October 15th when it was 1.49 percent. So, without the data from Brooklyn and even from this area in central Queens, what are we supposed to do? Do you have any numbers that would suggest one trend over another?

Mayor: Yeah, absolutely. Henry, first of all, the citywide data, which we're going over regularly, I think when I've said the word leveling off, over and over again, that's exactly right. The number you see today is, you know, kind in the middle of where we've been the last week or two, the highest I remember for a rolling average, seven-day average is about 1.75, as you said, we were down at 1.49. We're right in the middle there, and what it means is some stabilizing. Now remember if you're around 1.5 percent give or take, that puts us far ahead of the vast majority of the country. We got used to being down closer to one percent. We want to go back there and even go far beyond that. But right now, citywide, we do see a leveling off and it's at a number that certainly signals something good. In terms of the communities, as I said, it's something we continue to assess with the State. We want a lot more testing. It's one of the things we all would like to see more to get a clearer picture. But again, I remain hopeful that in all the red and orange areas that we're talking a matter of weeks, that we can resolve these issues, particularly if people go out and get tested. Go ahead.

Question: Okay. Mr. Mayor, I've requested for several weeks now, a ZIP code by ZIP code breakdown of the seven-day or even a 14-day average, a daily report that would be posted on the web. The Health Department says this is possible. They haven't delivered it yet. The Press Office is actually asking me to renew my request directly to your office and to you because the Health Department Press Office is a little bit frustrated about getting this done also. Can you give us a commitment that the public will be able to see on a granular ZIP code basis what the rolling average is, whether it's a seven or 14-day average? You have the data, why can't it be released publicly?

Mayor: Henry, look, we've got an unusual situation here and we've been open about it. And I said, there's been a lot of communication with the State. The State determined a different approach that is certainly made it important to be careful about the information we put out, so it doesn't create confusion, and it doesn't create a situation where there's two different interpretations going on publicly that make it hard for people to know where to go. So, we're being very, very clear on the big picture, what people need to know, that those decisions are going to be made, the City working with the State. We'll have more to say later this week on whether there's any immediate restrictions that can be adjusted. As I said, I think it's going to be a few more weeks in most areas. But I do not want to put out information that then causes you and everyone to constantly be further confused by the differences of the information. What I'd like us to do going forward is get consistent on this ZIP code measure. I think it is the easiest

way to do things going forward and we'll certainly have that conversation with the State and I'd like to get to the point that you're talking about, but I want to be very mindful in this moment where so many people are concerned and worried about, you know, their lives, their livelihood, that we give clear and consistent and not information that might confuse further.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Yehudit from Borough Park 24 News.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good, how are you?

Question: Good. Thank God. So some of the essential business owners in red zones such as the restaurant owners in Brooklyn, Borough Park, are being bombarded with citations, even after they say they put in health protocols that they know of such as keeping entire staffs masked and installing floor markers to show where people should stand to stay socially distance, and [inaudible] temperature [inaudible]. And then some of the business owners told me that when they ask for what the violations are being written, that some of the agents aren't even a 100 percent clear, they can't really articulate it. So, I was wondering if the Mayor would consider number one – if, well, some of the – some of the businesses are saying they get up to 10 visits a day. So, number one I'm asking is – is that maybe over kill? And also, would the Mayor consider perhaps mass emails or some other way of communicating the – if there are enhanced restrictions for the essential business owners so that they know what exactly what they are, because they don't seem to know exactly what more they're supposed to be doing?

Mayor: You know, I appreciate it and I've heard a couple of these concerns. Look, essential businesses remain open, non-essential businesses are the ones that are affected with the standards in the red and orange areas. If there's any confusion about that, we need to communicate that better, and we will in multiple languages, we want to make sure everyone understands that essential businesses remain open. Now, essential businesses, you'll remember, throughout this whole crisis still had to maintain crucial health and safety protocols. So, I don't want there to be confusion on that point. You can be an essential business, absolutely allowed to be open, but you still have to observe these fundamental protocols about how to keep people safe. You're a non-essential business, depending on the standards red and orange, you have to follow those standards. Now on the question of any inspector giving a judgment that appears to be contradictory with the rules, we need to know about that. If someone – if you know of cases like that, we need to hear about them. If you'll please share them with our teams so we can follow up. If someone feels that they were given a judgment that wasn't consistent with the rules, they should certainly call 3-1-1 and let us know that. We really, really want to make sure we get this right, but the bottom line to remember is, a business that is supposed to be closed, needs to be closed, hopefully only for a brief period of time and then open for the long haul, we all hope and pray. And a business that's allowed to be open because it's essential, still of course needs to follow basic health and safety rules. Go ahead.

Question: If they have those things in place that I mentioned, the floor marks and the masks on the staff and the temperature logs, they say that they never were informed the essential businesses of other things they're supposed to be doing. So, they're having 10 – sometimes 10

inspectors a day they say come in and they don't know exactly what else they're supposed to be doing. Is there any way you could email perhaps the essential business owners, what else they're supposed to be doing?

Mayor: Absolutely. We will, I think – I think over communication is definitely better in a moment like this. So what we will do for businesses in the red and orange areas is send out again, we'll get Small Business Services involved and our other agencies, send out again a list of reminders of who could be open, who cannot, what the rules are for the businesses that are open, where they can call with questions, we welcome those questions so we can clarify things and help people understand. Look, if perhaps someone didn't understand as an essential business, the health and safety rules previously, because they hadn't had an inspection, we want to go the extra mile to inform and educate. The goal here is to make things right, to make things healthy and safe, and that's what we'll focus on. So, yes, we will send a message out to all stores in the communities to let them know what those rules are.

Well, everyone, as we conclude today, look this today is, as I started, a reminder just how good the people are who serve us. I want to thank all our public servants. I want to thank all the people who work for the City government. I want to thank the ones who have gotten their attention they deserve and the respect and praise they deserve, and I want to thank all the folks who don't get that limelight but deserve it just as much for their amazing efforts. And I also want to remind people, that the people who serve you, you know, do it with such devotion. I can't tell you how many people have been working pretty much every day since this started and extraordinarily long hours, but they just stay as committed as ever, and I admire all of them, and the fact that a lot of talent keeps developing within our City government to serve our people and the two great people that we have named today to these crucial roles are examples of folks who came up through public service and have so much to offer, and now are going to be doing so much more for the city. So, I'll conclude with a simple point, I believe in New Yorkers. I believe in the ability and the talent and the drive and the energy and the compassion of New Yorkers. There is no place in the world that has New Yorkers, only New York City, and this is why we will come back and we will come back strong. Thank you, everyone.

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